

## REMARKS

By this Preliminary Amendment, Applicants have amended independent claims 1 and 8 and added a new method claim to clarify the inventive subject matter. No new matter has been added by this Amendment. Claims 3 and 12-17 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer.

The Examiner is thanked for the courtesies extended in an interview conducted on May 19, 2003. As was discussed during the interview, Applicants believe that the claims as amended are patentably distinct from known systems and Schlect, taken singly or in combination.

Particularly, none of the cited references or art teaches or suggests a system in which (i) a technician provides information in an electronic format related to a report of a malfunction upon determining that a cause of the malfunction occurs at another location; and (ii) upon identifying an entity responsible for causing the malfunction, the company utilizes the information provided in the report to generate a bill to the entity that includes costs incurred for servicing a first subscriber at a first location.

Schlect's teaching of a method for consolidating bill payments is not related to the subject matter of the claimed invention. Schlect does not disclose a system for receiving reports of malfunctions, for dispatching technicians, for receiving reports of malfunctions from a vicinity of a subscriber location, or for utilizing this information for preparing bills to an entity responsible for causing a malfunction.

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Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that pending claims 1-11 and 18-19 are now believed to be in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner have any questions or determine that any further action is desirable to place this application in even better condition for issue, the Examiner is encouraged to telephone applicants' undersigned representative at the number listed below.

SHAW PITTMAN LLP  
1650 Tysons Boulevard  
McLean, VA 22102  
Tel: 703/770-7900

Date: May 21, 2003

Respectfully submitted,

WILLIS ET AL.

By:

  
Michael A. Oblon  
Registration No. 42,956

Attachments: Amended Claims w/ Markings

MAO/ff  
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**VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE TO CLAIMS**

A system for automating the processing of damage claims [to company property] comprising:

    a dispatch division adapted to receive a report of a malfunction at a first subscriber location [of the company property];  
    the dispatch division dispatching a technician to the first subscriber location in response to the report;

upon determining that a cause of the malfunction occurs at another location, the technician providing information in an electronic format related to the report of the malfunction via a communications network from a vicinity of the first subscriber location, the network communicating with the technician and the company; and

upon identifying an entity responsible for causing the malfunction, [wherein] the company [uses] utilizing the information in the electronic format related to the report of the malfunction to generate a bill to the entity that includes costs incurred for servicing the first subscriber.

8. (Amended) A system for automating the processing of damage claims to [company property] a communications network comprising:

    a dispatch division adapted to receive a plurality of [first and second] reports of a malfunction at a plurality of locations, [of company property wherein the first and second reports are different];

the dispatch division capable of dispatching a first [and second] technician to a first location in response to [the first and second] one of the plurality of reports;

[the first technician diagnosing the first report of a malfunction and collecting data related to the first report;]

upon determining that a cause of the malfunction occurs at another location, the first technician providing a [the data related to the first] report from a vicinity of the first location via a communications network to the dispatch division; and

[the network capable of communicating with the first technician, the company and the dispatch division of the company;]

wherein the dispatch division identifies locations that are affected by the malfunction based upon the report, and refrains from dispatching technicians to locations other than a location where the malfunction is caused [reviews the data related to the first report, and based on that data, refrains from dispatching the second technician]; and

wherein the company identifies an entity responsible for causing the malfunction and uses the [data related to the first] report to generate a bill to the entity that includes costs incurred for dispatching the first technician to the first location.